



I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

San José has undergone many changes over the last 50 years. Before 1950, it was a relatively small community of farms and orchards. During the 1960's and 1970's, it was one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. Population projections of recent years forecast a continuation of growth pressures in San José, but these projections do not consider the real, local constraints on growth. These constraints include the eventual depletion of developable land, escalating public costs associated with growth, citizen concern with the adequacy of public services, the lack of revenue for funding public infrastructure required for growth, and the lack of alternative revenue sources for funding needed services at the local level. San José will continue to grow, but it can expect to grow more slowly than it has in the past.

The issue of growth is one which is central to any general plan. It has social, environmental, and economic dimensions. There are costs associated with growth, as

well as with the absence of growth. The vehicle for planning the future, for making choices between conservation and development, and for defining the desirable balance between social, environmental, and economic costs is the General Plan.

A general plan is an adopted statement of policy for the physical development of a community. As such, it represents the official policy regarding the future character and quality of development. This General Plan represents the City's assessment of the amount, type, and phasing of development needed to achieve the City's social, economic, and environmental goals. It was developed with the participation of all City departments and the community at large. It is a plan which can be implemented because it is realistic and provides some flexibility. It is designed to be used by all members of the community as the policy framework for decision-making on both private development projects and City capital expenditures. ■

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FORMAT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan of the City of San José is a comprehensive long-term plan. This Plan comprises an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of the official land use policy of the City of San José. It contains a statement of development policies and includes a Land Use/Transportation Diagram as well as text which sets forth the objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals.

This General Plan meets the minimum requirements and intent of the California Government Code while accommodating local conditions and circumstances. It contains each of the elements mandated by Government Code Section 65302. Since they are intrinsically interrelated and overlapping, the elements have been combined into a consistent meaningful whole, and organized in a manner designed to meet the needs of public officials, developers, neighborhood organizations and members of the community who will use it most frequently. In order to facilitate identification of the aspects of each mandatory element, Chapter VII "Reference" includes a comprehensive list of primary page references for each of the seven mandatory elements.

Data Analysis

An extensive amount of information was reviewed and analyzed in the preparation of this General Plan. This information was extracted from existing reports and studies which are listed in the Bibliography. Further analysis of this data is included in the background reports to the San José 2020 General Plan Update Task Force and the San José 2020 Environmental Impact Report. The background information is summarized in Chapter II. In addition, to facilitate an understanding of the context in which the

goals and policies were developed, the introduction to each topical section in Chapter IV contains a brief synopsis of relevant portions of the analysis. Specific background information on open space, seismic safety, noise and housing is included in separate Appendices to the General Plan.

Policy

The statement of development policies consists of the Land Use/Transportation Diagram and the text which, together, set forth the objectives, principles, standards and plans to guide development proposals. The Plan specifically identifies the major objectives for the San José 2020 time-frame in Chapter III, "Major Strategies". The Goals and Policies set forth in Chapter IV include principles, standards and plans which will guide the actions of the City in its attempts to achieve its long term objectives. The Land Use/Transportation Diagram and the Discretionary Alternate Use Policies in Chapter V are designed to enable the implementation of policies, principles, standards and plans in a realistic and flexible manner.

Implementation

Chapter VI summarizes the procedural framework for implementation that is outside of the General Plan. It includes descriptions of the City's Development Review Process, the Annual Budget Process and the Capital Improvement Program. It discusses the Annual Review and Amendment Process, which is intended to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and revised to continue to meet the objectives of the City. Special programs and techniques designed to aid in accomplishing the objectives of the Plan are also set forth in Chapter VI.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

History of the General Plan

Perspective

Geographically, the City of San José is larger and more varied than other cities in Santa Clara County. The City also has significant socio-economic diversity. It faces complex problems which it finds will only be solved by encouraging innovative and creative solutions. The General Plan must be read in this context. The General Plan must always be considered in its entirety with no single policy, principle, standard or plan read and considered in isolation. It is also necessary that the General Plan provides some flexibility and not be applied or interpreted in such a rigid manner as to impede attainment of its objectives.

The City of San José is firmly and resolutely committed to the objectives set forth as Major Strategies and Goals, and the General Plan is designed to guide actions in meeting those objectives.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

History of the General Plan

The City of San José's first comprehensive and fully integrated general plan - GP '75 - was adopted in March 1976. This General Plan contained all the individual elements required by State law yet integrated them into a single document which ensured the internal consistency of the Plan and created a comprehensive statement of City policy to guide San José's physical development.

After a comprehensive re-evaluation of City development policies by a 25-member Task Force, the City replaced GP '75 with the Horizon 2000 General Plan. Horizon 2000 built on, and refined, the policies and fundamental direction of GP '75. Horizon 2000 was designed to guide development in San José to the end of the twentieth century and was implemented with considerable

success. In the early 1990's it became apparent that there was a need to update and re-evaluate the General Plan since the City was approaching the horizon year of the Plan. The inclusion of new projections and other information was necessary to respond to the changing circumstances and concerns of the community.

San José 2020: Focus on the Future

The San José 2020 General Plan process was initiated by the City Council in early 1992 and was intended to be a focused update of the Horizon 2000 General Plan. Building on the established principles and policies of Horizon 2000, San José 2020 will guide the City into the twenty-first century. To update the Plan, the City Council appointed a 33-member task force comprised of representatives from each Council District, business organizations, environmental groups, housing advocates, development interests, neighborhood and community groups, three members of the City Council and one Planning Commissioner.

The Task Force began meeting in February 1992 and concluded its work in October 1993. The work program of the Task Force was divided into three phases: background, evaluation, and decision-making. During the background phase, the Task Force reviewed and discussed a variety of issue papers including subjects such as economic development, environmental issues, housing demographics, fiscal issues, urban service needs, and growth projections. Using this background information, the Task Force evaluated five potential land use or growth alternatives that could form the basis of the San José 2020 General Plan. These growth alternatives are described in Chapter II, Background for Planning. The Task Force also considered potential changes to the text of the General Plan, particularly the Major Strategies and the Goals and Policies

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chapters. The growth alternatives were used to compare the potential effects of different levels of growth on the City's economic, fiscal and environmental health. The Task Force selected a preferred growth alternative and recommended changes to the text of the General Plan during the final decision-making phase. The text changes included the addition of two new Major Strategies - Housing and Sustainable City - and policy changes covering the subjects of housing, urban services and Level of service, economic development, parks and recreation, and natural resources.

A series of community meetings was held at various locations throughout the City during each of the three phases described above. The intent of these meetings was to inform the public about the San José 2020 General Plan process and to receive public input on this process.

The Task Force selected Growth Alternative V to form the basis of the San José 2020 General Plan and recommended a series of text changes intended to strengthen and reinforce the fundamental policies which have guided development in San José since GP '75. San José 2020 represents the continuing evolution of San José into the twenty-first century. ■